

Congress looking into wild spending at the Pentagon and putting the Army on notice

July 19th, 2002

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ABC News/Good Morning America

You may remember that \$600 toilet seat that came to represent military waste. If you thought the days of wild spending were under control, think again. A congressional committee is putting the Army on notice for some unexpected military spending. ABC's John yang joins us now from the Pentagon. JOHN YANG reporting:

Bob, the issue here is use of Pentagon-issued credit cards. The idea was to save money by eliminating costly paperwork on small purchases, but investigators found that's not the way it's working out.

(VO) ...personnel rang up \$38,000 in credit card charges at strip clubs, \$630 in escort services, and charged with Pentagon credit cards marked for official government use only.

Representative JANICE SCHAKOWSKY (Democrat, Illinois): This is not just a nickel and dime kind of operation, a couple of guys going to a--a strip club. We are talking about a culture, a systematic problem within this department.

YANG: (VO) That culture seems to have applied to official purchases, too. A \$30,000 credit card purchase of 80 Palm Pilots was explained in an e-mail. A command decision was made to get enough goodies for everyone. The Palm Pilots ended up in a storage cabinet.

Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY (Republican, Iowa): It's also like a cancer, it catches on. And if a few officers can do it, why can't a few sergeants do it?

YANG: (VO) Congressional investigators said more than 1200 Army employees wrote bad checks to pay their government credit card bills. Last year alone, that cost taxpayers \$3.8 million in fees and lost rebates. At a House hearing, Pentagon officials admitted lax oversight. Lawmakers said the mismanagement rivals the accounting scandals in corporate America.

Rep. SCHAKOWSKY: We're talking about trillions, \$1.2 trillion, that we don't know where it is or how it's accounted for.

YANG: Lawmakers say that this could also be a national security problem. Forty of the Army's

worst cases of bad checks have security clearances of top secret or higher. Bob:

WOODRUFF: All right, John, national security problem.

And when GOOD MORNING AMERICA continues, the surprise announcement, Angelina Jolie files for divorce from her soul mate Billy Bob Thornton. Stay with us.